



# EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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98-2062D

## **Griswold invested as 25th presiding bishop of Episcopal Church January 10 in Washington**

(ENS) In a sweeping liturgy that combined soaring choral music, the heady rhythms of Native American drums and African-American spirituals, with the spectacle and color of stately processions, Frank Tracy Griswold of Chicago was invested as the 25th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church at Washington National Cathedral January 10.

After an extensive musical prelude, drawing on a wide variety of church traditions, almost 200 bishops of the church were joined by ecumenical guests and, for the first time, representatives of Islam and Judaism, in processions that flowed into the cathedral from all directions. Banners and colored streamers captured the festive air of the occasion, as the nearly 4,000 participants filled the cathedral to inaugurate a new season of leadership in the church.

Participants in the cathedral were joined by an estimated 7,000 church members at more than 200 downlink sites across the country who watched a live satellite television broadcast and participated locally in the service. A simultaneous audio feed over the worldwide Internet extended the audience internationally.

In one of the most poignant moments of the liturgy, former Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning presented the primatial staff to Griswold, a symbol of the role of presiding bishop, asking that he "lead us in witness to the world that genuine authority and true joy come only through walking the way of the cross with Christ, our Savior and Lord."

In his homily, Griswold said that the communion of spiritual fellowship "makes us permeable to truth: truth which is discovered in a living way through the sharing of the truth which is embodied in each of us, in what might be called the scripture of our own lives." Griswold added, "Each one of us is a bundle of agony and idiocy, of grace and truth caught up into Christ." That allows "your truth and my truth to address one another and give room to one another. In the process something happens between us which enlarges the truth each of us previously held. Such is the nature of that sacred enterprise we innocently call conversation which carries within it the possibility of conversion, of being turned in a new direction by the word, the truth, of the other."

It is "a capacity for ambiguity and paradox that is part of the glory and frustration of the Anglican way," giving it "the ability to discern and welcome truth in its various forms,"



Griswold said. Through what he called the "subtle yet exacting rhythms of our common prayer, the diverse and the disparate, the contradictory and the paradoxical, are woven together in the risen Christ." As a result, "different dimensions of truth, different experiences of grace, can meet together, embrace one another, and share the Bread of life."

In what he called "the ground of today's liturgy," Griswold and a group of assisting bishops moved to a large baptismal font in the middle of the nave and led the congregation in a renewal of their Baptismal Covenant. After filling bowls of water from the font, the party moved throughout the cathedral sprinkling the entire congregation with the water.

Expressing his "need for a different view of Washington," on the day after his investiture Griswold and his wife Phoebe journeyed to the other end of the District of Columbia for what he called "a reality check."

Far from the Gothic glories of the cathedral, Griswold and his party were greeted by the Rev. William Lewis, rector of the Chapel of St. Philip the Evangelist in Anacostia, for a walk through one of the poorest areas in the city prior to the Sunday morning service.

98-2063D

## **New presiding bishop reveals core of his spirituality during first press conference**

(ENS) At the stroke of midnight on January 1, 1998, as the silver globe descended atop Times Square in New York City, Bishop Frank Tracy Griswold officially became the 25th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church.

But 1,000 miles away it was still 11 p.m. as Griswold entered the sanctuary of the Church of the Ascension on LaSalle Street in Chicago to begin the liturgy celebrating the first day of January.

"It is the Feast of the Holy Name, which is also my baptismal day," Griswold told a group of reporters the day before his investiture on January 10 in Washington National Cathedral. "So in the homily I pointed out that I've come a long way from that font. Why I am here now is directly related to that experience 60 years ago when I was innocently baptized. So I said, 'Watch out! You never know where your baptism might in fact take you.'"

He was introduced formally as the new presiding bishop at the announcement time in Chicago, well after midnight eastern standard time. But for Griswold, spiritual matters and the liturgy took precedence to becoming "an ecclesial functionary."

Griswold is a voluble and eloquent story teller, and his remarks during his first press



conference in Washington provided an early glimpse at how he will respond as presiding bishop. Often throughout the 45-minute meeting with religious and secular press, Griswold redirected and focused questions and answers in spiritual terms and values while relating a story.

Even his "first official act as presiding bishop" led to a story about how he centers his spiritual life.

"I fled to a monastery in upstate New York for five days of retreat because I thought it was very important that I regained my center and approached this new ministry out of a grounded place of prayer and reflection," he said.

Fielding questions about church unity, interpretation of scripture, and his priorities for leading the church, Griswold said that the bottom line will be "this common search for the Word . . . and that's something that I will be shaped by as time goes by."

98-2064D

## **Telecast of investiture brings the church together**

"It was just as if we were in a side chapel on the other side of a wall from where it was happening. We stood. We sat. We listened. We received grace."

Thom Jensen of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Newark, Delaware, was one of more than 7,000 people at more than 215 locations across the continent -- at least one in every state including Alaska and Hawaii -- who participated in Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold's installation by satellite downlink on January 10. Cable and local access stations broadcast the service in 10 additional locations.

From a funeral parlor in Arizona to the ice-encrusted streets of Vermont and a country club in Chicago, the investiture service was hailed as a triumph of technology and as a way to bring the church together.

At many sites, celebrants consecrated bread and wine, distributed communion and conducted the same sprinkling of baptismal font waters after participants renewed their vows.

Vicar Gary Barker of Stanardsville, Virginia, probably spoke for many of those moved by the truly national service.

"It was neat to be celebrating communion together, crossing barriers. Communion is always supposed to be beyond time and space."



98-2065

## **Church wrestles with implications of attempts to appropriate church's name by conservatives**

(ENS) The creation of a new organization for "orthodox Episcopalians" who say they are dedicated to "upholding and propagating the historic faith" has added a new facet to the continuing struggle between conservatives and liberals in the Episcopal Church.

A self-described "loose affiliation" of bishops, clergy and lay people known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Incorporated (PECUSA, Inc.) in mid-December began soliciting funds and membership in the Diocese of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

When now-retired Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning became aware of the group, he challenged their actions and warned bishops of the church that PECUSA, Inc.'s efforts were "an unauthorized and misleading effort" which "violates the church's right and need to protect its name from misleading and unfair use."

A series of statements were exchanged during the holidays as Browning ended his 12-year tenure and prepared to turn over authority to Bishop Frank Tracy Griswold of Chicago, who became the 25th presiding bishop on January 1.

The controversy, which cast a shadow over Browning's departure, continued into the new year with some glimmers of reconciliation.

Griswold, in his first press conference as presiding bishop the day before his investiture on January 10, reaffirmed that he will be a bishop whose "heart must be open" and that "a bishop's door must be open to everyone, absolutely everyone."

"My sense is that I'm ready for conversation," Griswold said. "All one can do is to open the door and say 'Please come in, sit down and let's talk.' I certainly intend to do that. . . I do hope some of those who feel alienated and devalued in the life of the church will find a way to sit down and possibly together we can find a new way to live in communion with one another."

Among the first to ask for that opportunity is Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire (Wisconsin), founder of PECUSA, Inc. Griswold said he would honor Wantland's request for a meeting.

Wantland, who did not attend the investiture in Washington, said in a telephone interview that he, too, was willing to meet. "Frank does like to listen, and he likes to come to resolution on issues," Wantland said. "I would hope we can work together to avoid further damaging the church."

Members of the church's Executive Council attending Griswold's investiture were briefed about PECUSA, Inc. by Washington attorney David Beers, who served as Browning's chancellor and will continue to serve Griswold.

Beers told council members that "there is nothing unusual or untoward about the church's legal structure" because of PECUSA, Inc.'s incorporation and that the Episcopal Church's "rights are fully protected by law."

Beers explained that "common law doctrine" protects the name and assets of the Episcopal Church from "having somebody misappropriate our name or to mislead" in fund-



raising efforts.

He added that a variety of options were being considered in response to PECUSA, Inc. No legal actions have been filed.

98-2066D

## **Teams revising Lutheran-Episcopal Concordat should strive for clarity and candor**

(ENS) The writing teams appointed to revise the Concordat of Agreement, calling for full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church, should strive for clarity and candor, according to reports from a mid-December meeting in Chicago.

The writing teams met with an advisory panel appointed by the two churches to represent the wide range of opinion, especially those which have emerged in the ELCA. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church endorsed the Concordat in July but the ELCA fell six votes short of the two-thirds needed for passage. In subsequent resolutions, the ELCA called for an intense period of study and preparation of a revised proposal in time for its regional synods and its Churchwide Assembly in 1999.

In greeting the group, Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson of the ELCA said that the advisory panel would "assess concerns, represent various regions of the church and points of view, and help the drafters see both possibilities and how issues rank in importance."

Anderson said that the Concordat is an effort to come to some reconciliation of the ministries of both churches through the historic episcopate, taking into account the context of Lutherans in the United States today.

Former governor Albert Quie of Minnesota said, "Lutheran folks are so divided over the historic episcopate," which emerged as the most divisive component of the discussion at the Churchwide Assembly. "We need to find a point of unity within the ELCA and provide clarity of language that will lead to trust," he said.

After nearly 30 years of official dialogue, the two churches have agreed on the meaning of "apostolic succession," faithfulness to the Gospel proclamation through the centuries. But Episcopalians have maintained the historic episcopate, the consecration of bishops in a traditional line going back to the early church.

Prof. Todd Nichol of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, one of three Lutheran members of the writing team, said, "There is a practical element to the situation. We are quite badly strained, quite deeply divided, perhaps even dangerously so. We Lutherans need to be tending to the unity of our household."

The Rev. Thomas Prinz of Virginia said that the issue is "not just a matter of Lutheran unity...not primarily an interior issue, but a particular part of the call to unity in Christ. Lutheran unity alone will fall short of the larger goal."



98-2067D

## **World Council of Churches prepares for eighth assembly--and an uncertain future**

(ENS) As it prepares for its eighth assembly in Zimbabwe in December, the World Council of Churches faces a major turning point in its history.

Continuing financial problems, lingering confusion over its identity and direction, and possible defections by Orthodox members would seem to guarantee that the assembly will be a defining moment as the WCC celebrates its 50th anniversary. And for all of its claims to be the most representative Christian organization in the world, with over 300 members, the WCC still represents less than half of the world's Christians.

In an address to a mid-December meeting in Chicago of U.S. member churches of the WCC, General Secretary Konrad Raiser said that the decision to go to Harare was "a conscious expression of solidarity with the churches and peoples of Africa at a time when they are engaged in reconstructing the conditions of their lives."

Raiser said that the assembly theme, "Turn to God--Rejoice in Hope," speaks directly to the present African situation since the African nations are "engaged in a process of turning away from the structures of dependency" towards a "new process of liberation, regaining self-confidence--and in this process draws on the sources of the Christian faith of its people." Early in the next century, he observed, "Africa will be the continent with the largest Christian population."

Drawing on the table as "a symbol of community" in most cultures, Raiser observed that the table is extended when guests are expected, leading to "the occasion for a festive meal to celebrate the fellowship among friends or a particular moment in the life of a family."

When applied to "the present situation of the WCC and the organized ecumenical movement, the imagery draws attention to the fact that organized ecumenism is indeed an affair only of a minority among the different parts of world Christianity," confined largely to "the churches of historic Protestantism and of Orthodoxy." That means, Raiser pointed out, that the Pentecostal, Evangelical and Independent churches in Africa and Asia--to say nothing of the Roman Catholics--are not at the table.

The questions for Raiser are: Should the WCC seek to extend its membership, taking a "closer look at the barriers which its institutional structures may present to some potential member churches? Can the WCC maintain its role as the most representative and comprehensive ecumenical framework if, in fact, it only represents a minority among the world's Christian churches?" This anniversary meeting might be "the proper moment to consider whether steps should be taken to widen the circle of the ecumenical community," Raiser concluded.



98-2062

## **Griswold invested as 25th presiding bishop of Episcopal Church January 10 in Washington**

by James Solheim

(ENS) In a sweeping liturgy that combined soaring choral music, the heady rhythms of Native American drums and African American spirituals, with the spectacle and color of stately processions, Frank Tracy Griswold of Chicago was invested as the 25th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church at Washington National Cathedral January 10.

After an extensive musical prelude, drawing on a wide variety of church traditions, almost 200 bishops of the church were joined by ecumenical guests and, for the first time, representatives of Islam and Judaism, in processions that flowed into the cathedral from all directions. Banners and colored streamers captured the festive air of the occasion, as the nearly 4,000 participants filled the cathedral to inaugurate a new season of leadership in the church.

Participants in the cathedral were joined by an estimated 7,000 church members at more than 200 downlink sites across the country who watched a live satellite television broadcast and participated locally in the service. A simultaneous audio feed over the worldwide Internet extended the audience internationally.

### **Welcoming the presiding bishop**

When all had taken their places, a delegation moved to the west entrance to welcome the new presiding bishop. The moment of expectant silence was pierced by a loud knock at the portal. Bishop Ron Haines of Washington opened the doors and members of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Chicago introduced the new presiding bishop to the church "with pride, affection and gratitude for his ministry with us."

Former Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and House of Deputies President Pamela Chinnis asked the presiding bishop to affirm his commitment to his new ministry. When Browning asked the congregation if they would "do all in your power to support and uphold Frank in this ministry," they thundered in response, "We will." Haines extended the hospitality of the diocese and Dean Nathan Baxter invited Griswold "as our chief pastor to preside in this Eucharistic Assembly."

### **Symbols of ministry**

After presentations of the Jewish Torah and the Islamic Koran, the Episcopal Church's ecumenical partners stepped forward with gifts and symbols. Greek Orthodox Archbishop Spyridon presented an icon, Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson a copy of Confessions, the Rev. Joan Campbell of the National Council of Churches offered a copy of the Bible, Dr. Vivian Robinson of the Consultation on Christian Union brought a liturgy. Bishop Jack Snyder of St. Augustine, co-chair with Griswold of the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in this country, brought a Book of Blessings from the Roman Ritual. And the Sunday school at Chicago's St. James Cathedral brought a construction that symbolized "our worldwide household of faith," and representatives of the Anglican Communion offered



symbols of "the diversity of our worldwide communion and the challenges of our future together."

In one of the most poignant moments of the liturgy, Browning presented the primatial staff to Griswold, a symbol of the role of presiding bishop, asking that he "lead us in witness to the world that genuine authority and true joy come only through walking the way of the cross with Christ, our Savior and Lord."

When Browning presented his successor to the congregation, the cathedral erupted in sustained applause. After stepping into the congregation for a quick hug from his family, Griswold then moved to his chair behind the altar and led the congregation in prayer.

### **Homily emphasizes community**

In his homily, Griswold related an experience he had at Assisi, at the foot of a crucifix that "spoke to St. Francis," in the church where Francis prayed at the beginning of his conversion.

As he sat in the dark chapel, Griswold said that he was "drawn to the cross as though it were a magnet" and soon moved "from observer to participant," reciting a prayer written by Francis at the foot of the cross. "In the silence of the chapel, the prayer spoke to me," Griswold said. He discovered that God's call to Francis was a clear one--"go rebuild my church," a call that soon took hold of Griswold as well. With it came the realization that the task was not his alone, that God was saying that "it belongs to everyone who has been baptized into my death and resurrection. You are all called to rebuild my church."

The communion of spiritual fellowship "makes us permeable to truth: truth which is discovered in a living way through the sharing of the truth which is embodied in each of us, in what might be called the scripture of our own lives," Griswold said. "Each one of us is a bundle of agony and idiocy, of grace and truth caught up into Christ." That allows "your truth and my truth to address one another and give room to one another. In the process something happens between us which enlarges the truth each of us previously held. Such is the nature of that sacred enterprise we innocently call conversation which carries within it the possibility of conversion, of being turned in a new direction by the word, the truth, of the other."

It is "a capacity for ambiguity and paradox that is part of the glory and frustration of the Anglican way," giving it "the ability to discern and welcome truth in its various forms," Griswold said. Through what he called the "subtle yet exacting rhythms of our common prayer, the diverse and the disparate, the contradictory and the paradoxical, are woven together in the risen Christ." As a result, "different dimensions of truth, different experiences of grace, can meet together, embrace one another, and share the Bread of life."

In closing, Griswold said that he was "immensely hopeful" about the future of the church, "because of the good will and generosity of spirit which meets me almost everywhere I go...because of the vitality and faithfulness of congregations large and small...because of the deep desire on all sides to move beyond threat and accusation to a place of conversation, conversion, communion and truth...."



## **Renewal of the Baptismal Covenant**

In what he called "the ground of today's liturgy," Griswold and a group of assisting bishops moved to a large baptismal font in the middle of the nave and led members of the congregation in a renewal of their Baptismal Covenant. After filling bowls of water from the font, the party moved throughout the cathedral sprinkling the entire congregation with the water.

Led by the new presiding bishop, the liturgy moved into the Eucharist, with communion stations scattered at key points throughout the cathedral. At the end of the communion, the dean and the bishop of Washington escorted the presiding bishop to the stall in the Great Choir reserved for his use.

After blessing the congregation at the conclusion of the service, Griswold moved slowly down the aisle, pausing at the baptismal font, where he was joined by his wife Phoebe and his family. Drawing on a common theme of his ministry--accessibility and availability--he greeted the hundreds who pressed forward with words of welcome and encouragement.

## **A reality check**

Expressing his "need for a different view of Washington," on the day after his investiture the Griswolds journeyed to the other end of the District of Columbia for what he called "a reality check."

Far from the Gothic glories of the cathedral, Griswold and his party were greeted by the Rev. William Lewis, rector of the Chapel of St. Philip the Evangelist in Anacostia, for a walk through one of the poorest areas in the city prior to the Sunday morning service.

At Imani (faith in Swahili), the only sit-down restaurant in the area, they had coffee with the owner, Lamont Mitchell, who described his attempts to create a human space, a beacon of hope for those who needed a lift. "Nothing is more basic than gathering at the table," Griswold said in response.

The walls of the restaurant are covered with paintings and photos of prominent black leaders from politics, entertainment, and sports--and a Grandmothers Wall of photographs. Next to a stark drawing of a slave is an actual slave collar.

Mitchell's contagious enthusiasm infused the group even more than the hot coffee, as he expressed his hopes for rebuilding the neighborhood. During the conversation, he reminded his guests that "these are the very streets that Frederick Douglass walked when he lived nearby." Douglass was a powerful voice for emancipation of blacks during the mid-19th century and served as U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia.

## **Visit provides new energy**

During announcements at the service, Lewis offered a warm welcome to Griswold, expressing deep appreciation that he had chosen the parish for his first visit after investiture. "Your visit confirms your determination to be the bishop of all the people," he said. Griswold admitted that he woke that morning "feeling a little tired," but thanked the members for giving him "new energy." He said that his walk through the neighborhood had "taught him something of your rich life of service."

After the service, at which Griswold celebrated and preached, parish members and their

special guests gathered for a reception during which they listened to an African dance and drum group based in the parish and exchanged gifts--and affection.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

98-2063

## **New presiding bishop reveals core of his spirituality during first press conference**

by Michael Barwell

(ENS) At the stroke of midnight on January 1, 1998, as the silver globe descended atop Times Square in New York City, Bishop Frank Tracy Griswold officially became the 25th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church.

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He was introduced formally as the new presiding bishop at the announcement time in Chicago, well after midnight eastern standard time. But for Griswold, spiritual matters and the liturgy took precedence to becoming "an ecclesial functionary."

### **Grounded in prayer**

Griswold is a voluble and eloquent story teller, and his remarks during his first press conference in Washington provided an early glimpse at how he will respond as presiding bishop. Often throughout the 45-minute meeting with religious and secular press, Griswold redirected and focused questions and answers in spiritual terms and values while relating a story.

Even his "first official act as presiding bishop" led to a story about how he centers his spiritual life.

"I fled to a monastery in upstate New York for five days of retreat because I thought



it was very important that I regained my center and approached this new ministry out of a grounded place of prayer and reflection," he said.

Griswold has been going to the Roman Catholic Benedictine community of Mount Savior Monastery in Elmira, New York, for 34 years and the brothers there "have followed me through every turning in my life." He said that it "was a wonderful way to go through the final piece of transition," which began on July 21, when he was elected presiding bishop in Philadelphia during the church's General Convention. He described transition as a "time of grace and confusion" as he completed his duties as bishop of Chicago and tried to "get up to speed with my new responsibilities."

Griswold confided that he is well aware of the pressures facing him during the next nine years. He said that he told the Benedictines, "You're going to be very important to me in the months and years to come because by virtue of the office of presiding bishop I'm going to become a center of controversy--like it or not. And probably in some people's minds I'm not even going to be a human being. I'm simply going to be a living issue of some sort," he said. "It's very important therefore that some people have a sense of who Frank Griswold really is who have nothing to do with the Episcopal Church and its ecclesial systems, but simply know him as a person of prayer, a devotee of St. Benedict and a long-time friend."

### **Some tough first questions**

The questions from the press began with some tough queries and perceptive answers.

"Where do you expect to lead the church?" was the first query.

Griswold pounced on the question: "I hope to lead the church in the right direction," he said with a chuckle, displaying his well-known wit and humor, immediately switching gears to provide a serious answer. "I think that--just to stay with the Benedictinism that I referred to earlier--one of my models for ministry is the abbot as depicted in the role of St. Benedict. And the abbot is seen very much as one who listens to the different voices within the community, can be aware of the different needs that exist in the community, can also listen to the visitor who introduces a word of insight or criticism that the community might not be aware of by virtue of simply living the life.

"But the abbot is going to listen to a diversity of voices and hearing all those voices, and what they have to say into the ongoing life of the community," he explained. "So I think broadly conceived, mine is a ministry of drawing people together in conversation, mine is a ministry of listening with care to the diverse voices in the community, and making sure that diversity is honored."

### **'Discovering together'**

Several times he referred to his "rather foundational" experiences as a priest and bishop in responding to questions about his leadership style.

Comparing his first experiences in a wealthy, suburban parish in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and a smaller congregation in Yardley, Griswold said he "had to learn all over again what it meant to be a minister, that I had so defined myself in terms of that first experience at the other church, that I had to learn from these people who I was. Over time it became very clear to me, partially because the congregation pulled ministry out of me, that I

was not so much shaping and forming them, as I was being shaped and formed by them--and that together we were discovering in a living way the word of God in our midst.

"I have found since then, moving on to another congregation and then into my life as the diocesan bishop, that in each case I have been formed by the community," he said, "and that the Word has emerged from our life shared rather than being something that I simply declared."

As he enters into his new ministry, Griswold said that he wonders "first of all what community is going to be because it is so diverse and spread out. My community is a series of sub-communities. I assume that in each instance we're going to find the Word together. It's not so much a question of Frank Griswold determining what needs to be done, or what should be said, but Frank Griswold listening with care and out of what is heard in the conversation with the community then speaking. It's an unfolding, dynamic notion. . ."

### **Always an open door**

Questioned about various groups within the church vying for leadership or attention, Griswold returned to the promise he made in his election acceptance remarks at General Convention.

". . . A bishop's heart must be open, a bishop's door must be open to everyone, absolutely everyone," said Griswold, quoting a Brazilian Roman Catholic bishop. "Don't try to pin me down either to the right or to the left. My sense is that I'm ready for conversation. All one can do is to open the door and say, 'please come in, please sit down and let's talk.' I certainly intend to do that and hope to do that. I think on the other hand . . . they can choose not to come in and talk, there's no way you can compel them to do so. The door is open and I do hope that some of those who feel alienated and devalued in the life of the church will find a way to sit down and possibly together we can find a new way to live in communion with one another.

"Certainly there are voices abroad in the church threatening separation and calling for the establishment of separate provinces," Griswold said in ticking off some of the issues facing the church. "Conversation with dioceses that do not recognize the ministry of ordained women is something else on the desk to be dealt with. I think more fundamentally for me there is the whole question of what does it mean to be the presiding bishop, getting my sea legs, so to speak."

### **What is truth?**

One questioner suggested that both sides in the issue of ordaining homosexuals claim either "propositional truth" or personal experience as the ultimate authority.

"There are different modes of truth and propositional truth is one mode of that truth," Griswold explained. "Truth is presented to us relationally. Jesus says 'I am the truth.' The only way to know the truth in Jesus is through relationship. 'I in you and you in me'--the mutual indwelling, which is certainly supported by the whole sacramental system of the church. It's all a question of relationship."

It is important, Griswold said, "for people who take their stand on Scripture to realize that Scripture itself is an account of people's experience of God, and that the Lord of Scripture--that is, the risen Christ--presents truth relationally and experientially. One can go



beyond that to the Acts of the Apostles, where it was the experience of the Holy Spirit showing up in unlikely and seemingly suspect places that made the early church aware of the fact that the gentiles could be included in the community. So experiential truth is biblical truth in large measure, and propositional truth, though an important part of tradition, isn't as biblical as experiential truth.

"I would hope to help the community become more biblical," he added, "in that sense as it looks at the whole question of what's true."

#### **Final reassurances**

Pressed to offer an absolute or firm assurance that "the church should be able to give to people who are seeking God," Griswold returned to the basics of church teachings.

"Our salvation is in Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. That's where I would start," Griswold said. "I would say that we encounter Christ, to borrow from St. Ambrose of Milan, face to face in the sacraments that the sacraments shape and form us and mediate the presence of the risen Christ for us.

"I would say that Christ is the Lord of Scripture. My sense is that Christ continues to make the scriptural word the living word in our experience through the power of the spirit that . . . unfolds it over time. The truth is developmental. We are always growing into the truth who is Christ and so we must listen carefully and discerningly to truth as it comes to us in a variety of ways and see that as part of the unfolding mystery of the risen Christ in our midst."

For Griswold, the bottom line will be "this common search for the Word . . . and that's something that I will be shaped by as time goes by."

**--Michael Barwell is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.**

98-2064

## **Telecast of investiture brings the church together**

**by Nan Cobbey**

"It was just as if we were in a side chapel on the other side of a wall from where it was happening. We stood. We sat. We listened. We received grace."

Thom Jensen of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Newark, Delaware, was one of more than 7,000 people at more than 215 locations across the continent -- at least one in every state including Alaska and Hawaii -- who participated in Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold's installation by satellite downlink on January 10. Cable and local access stations broadcast the service in 10 additional locations.

"There could have been over 20,000 to 25,000 people who saw this," says Julie Zietlow, project coordinator for Episcopal Cathedral Teleconferencing Network.

### **A new era**

"The service was wonderful... we have truly moved into a new era," said Jensen, who only days earlier had been cynical about "pretending" to be present. .

"I joined in the hymns, prayed strongly and really for our new PB [presiding bishop] and received communion... Mea culpa for my negativity earlier. I have been reborn."

Others felt the same. "Good show, good show!" boomed the Rev. Don Belcher, rector of St. Luke's in Libby, Montana. He facilitated a downlink site for several parishes at his hunting-lodge-turned-retreat center in Yaak. Fourteen brave souls drove 40 miles through a blizzard to get there, some of them arriving the night before. They praised the quality of the telecast.

"It was as if we were next door to you," said an enthusiastic Belcher. "We could see everything perfectly. We could practically count the freckles on Phoebe Griswold's face... When Episcopalians do it, they do it right!"

At many sites, celebrants consecrated bread and wine, distributed communion and conducted the same sprinkling of baptismal font waters after participants renewed their vows.

That was the case in rural Stanardsville, Virginia, where 11 gathered in Grace Church. Their vicar, the Rev. Gary Barker, thought he was entirely prepared.

"I knew there was going to be a baptismal component so I brought water," he said. "I didn't know they were going to use boxwood [to sprinkle the congregation] so I didn't have that, but we all got wet."

### **Funeral homes, bars and clubs**

In Albuquerque, New Mexico, at Sandia Funeral Care auditorium where the Rev. Canon Byron D. McDougall had arranged a downlink site, 76 folks gathered "in a proper Episcopal setting," with proper altar and proper Eucharistic candles, he said.

"We even transported a font to enhance the event."

In a northern suburb of Chicago, 70 folks showed up for breakfast and telecast at the Glencoe Golf Club. Joan Sholten, local representative of the National Cathedral Association, served fresh fruit, bagels, coffee and tea to guests from several parishes along the North Shore and western suburbs.

"Everybody signed a great big card and we are sending it to Frank and Phoebe to let them know that we worshiped and celebrated this time with them," said Sholten, who has donated the offering to a fund for struggling parishes in the Diocese of Chicago.

### **Still out of touch**

With phone lines still down in northern New York state after January's ice storm, it was impossible to determine whether the Rev. Nancy Betz was finally able to downlink the installation at Caddyshack, a sports bar in Clayton where she'd found an agreeable dish-owner.

Parishioners from half a dozen small parishes near the Canadian border had been planning to participate in a simultaneous Eucharist before the icestorm of the century pulled down trees and powerlines.

In neighboring Vermont, only 30 people were able to make it through ice and shattered trees to St. Paul Cathedral in Burlington.



But June Schulte said it was worth the effort. "During the chanting of the Lord's Prayer, the sun broke through the gloomy skies and flooded the cathedral with sunlight. It felt warm. It was the first sunshine we had seen in the greater part of a treacherous week. I expect I wasn't the only one smiling through tears."

At St. Paul's Cathedral in Detroit, 140 people participated in a concelebrated Eucharist at an altar before a seven-foot screen. "We processed in at the point of the introit," said the Rev. Sandra Richardson. Celebrants conducted a healing service and invited participants to a reception afterwards as well.

"It was an exciting day. People really felt they were there, not just watching."

In Hartford, Connecticut, the 35 people participating at Christ Cathedral passed the peace and then gathered around the 30-inch monitor to look for others they knew in the service.

In Minneapolis, the Rev. Don Nesheim brought his combined confirmation classes to the Cathedral Church of St. Mark as a means of kicking off their instruction.

#### **E-mailed accolades**

Praise for the telecast traveled quickly through cyberspace.

"Fabulous!!!! When can we get a copy of the tape?" Diocese of Texas communications director Carol Barnwell wanted to know.

"WOW! How did you do that?" e-mailed Catherine T. Boyd, editor of the Episcopal Church Women's "Communique," from Lexington, Kentucky.

"An incredible job of transmission. We all felt very involved," wrote Sarah Moore, director of church communications at the School of Theology, Sewanee, Tennessee, where 40 showed at the campus downlink site.

Vicar Gary Barker of Stanardsville, Virginia, probably spoke for many of those moved by the truly national service.

"It was neat to be celebrating communion together, crossing barriers. Communion is always supposed to be beyond time and space."

--Nan Cobbey is features editor of **Episcopal Life**, the national newspaper for Episcopalians.

98-2065

## **Church wrestles with implications of attempts to appropriate church's name by conservatives**

**by Michael Barwell**

(ENS) The creation of a new organization for "orthodox Episcopalians" who say they are dedicated to "upholding and propagating the historic faith" has added a new facet to the continuing struggle between conservatives and liberals in the Episcopal Church.

A self-described "loose affiliation" of bishops, clergy and lay people known as Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Incorporated (PECUSA, Inc.) in mid-December began soliciting funds and membership in the Diocese of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

When now-retired Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning became aware of the group, he challenged their actions and warned bishops of the church that PECUSA, Inc.'s efforts were "an unauthorized and misleading effort" which "violates the church's right and need to protect its name from misleading and unfair use."

A series of letters, conversations, accusations, counter-charges, and press statements were exchanged during the holidays as Browning ended his 12-year tenure and prepared to turn over authority to Bishop Frank Tracy Griswold of Chicago, who became the 25th presiding bishop on January 1.

The controversy, which cast a shadow over Browning's departure, continued into the new year with some glimmers of reconciliation.

### **Open door, pastoral approach**

Griswold, in his first press conference as presiding bishop the day before his investiture on January 10, reaffirmed that he will be a bishop whose "heart must be open" and that "a bishop's door must be open to everyone, absolutely everyone."

"My sense is that I'm ready for conversation," Griswold said. "All one can do is to open the door and say, 'Please come in, sit down and let's talk.' I certainly intend to do that.

"I think on the other hand . . . they can choose not to come in and talk, there's no way you can compel them to do so," Griswold said. "The door is open and I do hope some of those who feel alienated and devalued in the life of the church will find a way to sit down and possibly together we can find a new way to live in communion with one another."

Among the first to ask for that opportunity is Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire (Wisconsin), founder of PECUSA, Inc. Griswold said he would honor Wantland's request for a meeting. "I look forward to that conversation. That's obviously where I will begin."

Wantland, who did not attend the investiture in Washington, said in a telephone interview that he, too, was willing to meet. "Frank does like to listen, and he likes to come to resolution on issues," Wantland said. "I would hope we can work together to avoid further damaging the church."

### **Founded in 1996**

According to documents filed with the State of Wisconsin, Wantland chartered



PECUSA, Inc. in August 1996. Joining Wantland as co-founders were Canon Lawrence Rowe of All Saints Church, Altoona, Wisconsin, and Eunice Muenzberg of Eau Claire. Incorporating documents listed Wantland as president, Bishop John Howe of Central Florida as vice president, and Bishop John-David Schofield of San Joaquin (California) as a director.

Both Howe and Schofield have since resigned from the organization.

In a letter to his clergy announcing his resignation from PECUSA, Inc., Howe wrote that he had been approached by Wantland "about a year and a half ago" suggesting "there might be a way of creating a structure within the church that would preserve its faithfulness to the scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, and the faith we have received. It would not be a matter of creating a new organization, but simply be incorporating who we are . . ."

"Bishop Wantland's thought was that if at some point the General Convention should take actions that were truly unacceptable, actions that represented a departure from 'the faith once entrusted to the saints,' there would be a kind of safety zone within the church where orthodox believers could remain. . . . I agreed to be a part of that effort and to put my name on the board of trustees."

Saying "it was never our intention" to create confusion or engage in misleading and unfair use, Howe wrote, "I initially thought this was a prudent, protective step to take, but now I fear it will be the occasion for a contentious struggle."

Other church leaders also distanced themselves. Bishop James Stanton of Dallas--whose name appeared on at least one of the documents registering PECUSA, Inc. in 45 states--said in a statement in early January, "I was not in any way involved in organizing or registering PECUSA, Inc. When Bishop Wantland informed me that I had been elected (in my absence) as vice president, I informed him that I would not be part of that effort. It was not a project I was interested in or wanted to be a part of. I was assured that my name would be removed and that another election would be held for vice president. That, for me, was the end of the matter."

### **Legal issues considered**

Members of the church's Executive Council attending Griswold's investiture were briefed about PECUSA, Inc. by Washington attorney David Beers, who served as Browning's chancellor and will continue to serve Griswold.

Beers told council members that "there is nothing unusual or untoward about the church's legal structure" because of PECUSA, Inc.'s incorporation and that the Episcopal Church's "rights are fully protected by law."

Beers also said that "there is nothing Wantland has done that threatens the church's structure or rights." Noting that "they cannot be forced to stop using our name," he added that PECUSA Inc.'s formation "does not have considerable legal significance."

The Episcopal Church was founded in 1789 with a "Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." The name was never incorporated. In 1846, however, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America was incorporated in New York State. Originally a fund-raising organization for missionary activity, the DFMS evolved into the corporate structure of the Episcopal Church. Members of Executive Council serve as the board of directors and the presiding bishop is president.

Since 1837, efforts have been made to remove the word "Protestant" from the name of the church--mostly at the request of Anglo-Catholics. In 1964, General Convention added a preamble to the Constitution, which states the name of the church is "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church (which name is hereby recognized as also designating the Church)."

### **Some changes made**

PECUSA, Inc. seems to have backed away from claims in its original Wisconsin charter that its purpose was to "engage in religious, educational and charitable activities and particularly the executive, administrative and financial administration of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church. It shall have charge of the Church pension fund and the church's program . . ."

In a statement in mid-December, Wantland noted that Browning had requested, and the trustees had agreed, to remove that language from the charter which Wantland admitted was "not appropriate to what we were about."

"The trustees were fully willing to amend the Articles of Incorporation to make it crystal clear that we were not laying any claim to the programs or funds" of the national church structure, Wantland wrote. He explained in a recent telephone interview that the words had been lifted "word for word" from Eau Claire's diocesan charter. He also noted that a letter had been sent to Alan Blanchard, president of the Church Pension Fund, disavowing any claims to clergy or lay pensions.

Wantland also claimed in his statement that "the National Church had begun to remove from the Church Constitution all references to the old title . . . As the old name was abandoned, so the old Faith was abandoned."

Beers explained that "common law doctrine" protects the name and assets of the Episcopal Church from "having somebody misappropriate our name or to mislead" in fund-raising efforts.

He added that a variety of options were being considered in response to PECUSA, Inc. No legal actions have been filed.

Beers noted that in the event of a schism---or formal split in the church--it would be "unlikely they could take existing property." But "there is no threat to our legal position at this time," Beers said. "We have time. If, ultimately, legal actions are needed" they will be taken.

But Beers suggested that a pastoral approach would be among the first choices.

### **Praying for unity in Kansas**

Bishop William Smalley of Kansas responded to what he called "recent threats to unity" by calling his diocese to join him in prayer.

Considered by some to be a conservative bishop, Smalley has invited all of the parishes in his diocese to join in a covenant to "work and witness for the mission and unity of the Episcopal Church."

Smalley said the church "is called to be people of light, to brighten every corner of God's world by our lives and witness." But he said that "light is being darkened by divisions within the Episcopal Church, and that energies that should go for mission are being diverted



inwardly to maintain our corporate life."

Citing PECUSA, Inc's actions, Smalley said he decided to draw the diocese into a plan for unity. He also criticized groups attempting to operate outside of canonical boundaries of the church and dioceses which have withheld funds from national church operations in protest.

Smalley, who is a member of the presiding bishop's Council of Advice has asked all parishes to join in a four-point covenant by praying and pledging not to "join or give support or encouragement to any group that advocates division and disunity in the Episcopal Church."

"The Diocese of Kansas has been a faithful partner with the Episcopal Church," Smalley wrote in the diocesan newspaper *Plenteous Harvest*. "We have always abided by the canons of the church and the resolutions of General Convention. We have unfailingly fulfilled our financial obligations to the ministry of the Episcopal Church. We have provided leadership to the Episcopal Church through many of our members who served in national roles. We also have been a diocese relatively free from the divisions that have marked the Episcopal Church in other places."

--Michael Barwell is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church. Melody Woerman of the Diocese of Kansas contributed to this report.

98-2066

## **Teams revising Lutheran-Episcopal Concordat should strive for clarity and candor**

by Ann Hafften and James Solheim

(ENS) The writing teams appointed to revise the Concordat of Agreement, calling for full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church, should strive for clarity and candor, according to reports from a mid-December meeting in Chicago.

The writing teams met with an advisory panel appointed by the two churches to represent the wide range of opinion, especially in the ELCA. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church endorsed the Concordat in July but the ELCA fell six votes short of the two-thirds needed to accept the Concordat. In subsequent resolutions, the ELCA called for an intense period of study and preparation of a revised proposal for its regional synods and in time for its Churchwide Assembly in 1999.

In greeting the group, Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson of the ELCA said that the advisory panel would "assess concerns, represent various regions of the church and points of view, and help the drafters see both possibilities and how issues rank in

importance."

Anderson said that the Concordat is an effort to come to some reconciliation of the ministries of both churches through the historic episcopate, taking into account the context of Lutherans in the United States today.

### **What are we talking about?**

"No one seemed to agree on what the text of the Concordat meant," said the Rev. Joan Mau of Wisconsin. "To agree on a document we need to know what we're talking about."

Former governor Albert Quie of Minnesota said, "Lutheran folks are so divided over the historic episcopate," which emerged as the most divisive component of the discussion at the Churchwide Assembly. "We need to find a point of unity within the ELCA and provide clarity of language that will lead to trust," he said.

After nearly 30 years of official dialogue, the two churches have agreed on the meaning of "apostolic succession," faithfulness to the Gospel proclamation through the centuries. But Episcopalians have maintained the historic episcopate, the consecration of bishops in a traditional line going back to the early church.

Bishop Peter Rogness of Milwaukee underscored the agreement on apostolic succession and added, "Our understandings of oversight and authority are much the same. The proposal's increased emphasis on clergy is not as massive as some in the ELCA think. It does not call for such a big shift, just an affirmation of both traditions."

### **Dangerously divided?**

Prof. Todd Nichol of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, one of three Lutheran members of the writing team, said, "There is a practical element to the situation. We are quite badly strained, quite deeply divided, perhaps even dangerously so. We Lutherans need to be tending to the unity of our household."

Nichol is convinced that the task is "to achieve a consensus as broad and deep as possible so as many ELCA members as possible can say Yes. Ecumenism begins at home," he said. "Our ecumenical efforts need to take account of the fact that the ELCA is a young and tender church, only 10 years old."

In an effort to deal honestly with the issues, Nichol argued that both churches "need to be absolutely clear with each other, so that each fully understands and agrees to the meanings and consequences attached by the other to words and gestures, documents, practices and ritual actions."

The Rev. Thomas Prinz of Virginia said that the issue is "not just a matter of Lutheran unity...not primarily an interior issue, but a particular part of the call to unity in Christ. Lutheran unity alone will fall short of the larger goal."

Some participants expressed concern that major changes in the Concordat could threaten the whole process. Dr. Michael Root of the Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg, another member of the writing team, cautioned against "changing the Concordat too much," stressing the need for "clarity and a mission context." He said that the ELCA should "not try so hard for 85 percent of the vote if that means not producing something that will get 75 percent."



### **Episcopalians encouraged**

The Rev. David Perry, the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officer, said that he was impressed with the "breadth and openness and forthrightness" of the Lutheran advisory panel. "Their commitment to the task, to find a way to bring our two churches to full communion, is very encouraging." Perry does not minimize the difficulty of the task, observing that "it will require of all of us a sensitivity to the issues which have brought us to this point." Yet he continues to believe that "the Spirit will help us do what God wants."

Perry also expressed confidence in the Episcopal writing team--Prof. J. Robert Wright of the General Theological Seminary, the Rev. William Norgren, former ecumenical officer, and Bishop Chris Epting of Iowa, who chairs the team. "These people have been involved from the beginning of our dialogue and they will represent our church very well," he said. The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations will serve as the Episcopal Church's advisory panel since it is broadly representative of the church and has direct access to the General Convention.

Epting agreed with Perry, adding that "our conversations at this point are full and rich--but we are in the earliest stages of our work on the Concordat." He is also convinced that both sides must proceed with "the greatest care and sensitivity" if they hope to put together something that will move Episcopalians and Lutherans forward in mission. "If we succeed in our task, it would be a very hopeful sign for other churches in this country, and lead us into a whole new area in ecumenical relations."

98-2067

## **World Council of Churches prepares for eighth assembly--and an uncertain future**

by James Solheim

(ENS) As it prepares for its eighth assembly in Zimbabwe in December, the World Council of Churches faces a major turning point in its history.

Continuing financial problems, lingering confusion over its identity and direction, and possible defections by Orthodox members would seem to guarantee that the assembly will be a defining moment as the WCC celebrates its 50th anniversary. And for all of its claims to be the most representative Christian organization in the world, with over 300 members, the WCC still represents less than half of the world's Christians.

In an address to a mid-December meeting in Chicago of U.S. member churches of the WCC, General Secretary Konrad Raiser said that the decision to go to Harare was "a conscious expression of solidarity with the churches and peoples of Africa at a time when they are engaged in reconstructing the conditions of their lives." He pointed out that conditions in Africa have "changed dramatically" since the WCC assembly in Nairobi in 1975.

Raiser said that the assembly theme, "Turn to God--Rejoice in Hope," speaks directly to the present African situation since the African nations are "engaged in a process of turning away from the structures of dependency" towards a "new process of liberation, regaining

self-confidence--and in this process draws on the sources of the Christian faith of its people." Early in the next century, he observed, "Africa will be the continent with the largest Christian population."

The theme of hope "reflects the feeling of being liberated from the sense of fatalism and despair which characterizes so many analyses commenting on the African situation from the outside," Raiser added.

### **Extending the table**

Drawing on the table as "a symbol of community" in most cultures, Raiser observed that the table is extended when guests are expected, leading to "the occasion for a festive meal to celebrate the fellowship among friends or a particular moment in the life of a family."

When applied to "the present situation of the WCC and the organized ecumenical movement, the imagery draws attention to the fact that organized ecumenism is indeed an affair only of a minority among the different parts of world Christianity," confined largely to "the churches of historic Protestantism and of Orthodoxy." That means, Raiser pointed out, that the Pentecostal, Evangelical and Independent churches in Africa and Asia--to say nothing of the Roman Catholics--are not at the table.

The questions for Raiser are: Should the WCC seek to extend its membership, taking a "closer look at the barriers which its institutional structures may present to some potential member churches? Can the WCC maintain its role as the most representative and comprehensive ecumenical framework if, in fact, it only represents a minority among the world's Christian churches?" This anniversary meeting might be "the proper moment to consider whether steps should be taken to widen the circle of the ecumenical community," Raiser concluded.

### **Table as symbol of division**

The barrier to a common celebration of Holy Communion at WCC meetings raises the difficult issue of "Eucharistic fellowship and hospitality," Raiser said, pointing to "the contradictions in our present ecumenical reality." He asked, "Can we seriously consider extending the ecumenical table when in fact this table is seriously divided?" Delegates to the Canberra assembly in 1991 expressed "pain and disappointment" when they were barred from sharing communion in the Orthodox liturgy, leading to some resentment on both sides.

"The doctrinal and canonical reasons are obviously in conflict with a rapidly evolving ecumenical situation and do not respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of a new generation of active participants in the ecumenical movement," Raiser said. The Orthodox believe that sharing the Eucharist can only be considered as the sign of full church unity.

"The sharing of the Eucharist has become the central symbol for the unity we seek," Raiser said. This emphasis means that the barriers in sharing a common ecumenical table "has become a symbol of division." An alternative might be a return to the practice of the early Christian communities "of sharing a simple meal to affirm our ecumenical fellowship....an act of a non-Eucharistic breaking of bread together," realistically acknowledging that "the orders of our churches do not yet allow full Eucharistic fellowship."

The Harare assembly, Raiser announced, "will include a festive sharing of food and



drink to affirm our ecumenical fellowship." Yet he is convinced that "any consideration about extending the ecumenical table would not be honest as long as we have not addressed this basic contradiction in our present fellowship."

### **Orthodox reevaluating membership**

Talk of "widening the circle" and extending the table makes Orthodox members of the WCC quite nervous. They argue that they are an increasingly marginalized minority, leading to a broad reevaluation of their continued membership. "The Orthodox churches have increasingly expressed concern about the increase in the number of very small Protestant churches in WCC membership, while the number of Orthodox member churches has remained unchanged." In an effort to "redress the balance and secure a proper place for the large churches of the Orthodox tradition... the proposal has recently been advanced to reorganize the WCC according to families of churches, following the model developed in the Middle East Council of Churches," Raiser said.

The Orthodox have also been critical of what they perceive as the politically activist role of the WCC, at the expense of theological issues. Observers assume that they will raise the issue at Harare.

### **Marvelous, maddening family**

High on the agenda at the Harare assembly will be an attempt to resolve some of the more persistent identity issues. A policy statement, "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC," is the result of more than eight years of study and consultation. "The rich, extensive and enthusiastic discussions that have gone into this text have attested to a profound ecumenical engagement and commitment to the WCC among member churches and partners," says the Preface to the statement. Yet it is also clear that the churches don't yet agree on some of the goals of the ecumenical movement and the "nature of the fellowship."

Suggestions that a global forum replace the assemblies have been embraced by many churches. Yet Prof. Janice Love of South Carolina, a United Methodist member of the WCC Central Committee, argued that the assembly is the only place where all members are represented and where they can "claim ownership" of the ecumenical agenda. "It is a remarkable array of Christendom gathered in one place...a dozen communities from a hundred countries." She called it "a marvelous, maddening family."

That family, facing some internal dissensions, will have an opportunity to reaffirm its allegiances, to each other and to common purposes. In doing so the WCC will be charting a course that will take it into the new millennium, with what its members clearly hope will be renewed energy and commitment.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-2067

### **Transition period is over, Griswold tells national staff**

(ENS) On his first day in the office, following his January 10 investiture at Washington National Cathedral, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold gathered the staff at the Episcopal Church Center and said, "The period of transition has finally come to an end." He said the service was "very positive, giving the church the opportunity to experience itself in a place of hopefulness and in worship." And he was intrigued by the "extension of community" made possible by the 215 downlink sites where Episcopalians across the country could join in the cathedral service at the local level. He called it "an imaginative foray" into the exploration of new technologies which could be very useful in connecting the national and local perspectives of the church. "There's energy in the community--and that is important for us at this moment," he said. "It reminds us of a larger perspective, encouraging us to celebrate the unity we all share in our baptism." During a period of staff comments and questions, he was asked if he was prepared to switch his allegiances to Chicago's sports teams, the Bull and the Bears. Griswold responded that he "may be ready to have my allegiances stretched." He ended the session saying, "I'm here, get used to me, let's figure out how we work together in this time of mutual discovery. Let's see what divine sense of humor and God's boundless grace are up to."

### **General Theological Seminary elects Buffalo rector as dean**

(ENS) Following a nine-month search process, on January 12 the trustees of the General Theological Seminary in New York elected the Rev. Ward B. Ewing, rector of Trinity Church in Buffalo, as the 12th dean and president of the church's oldest seminary. A graduate of Trinity College and the General Seminary, Ewing has been rector in Buffalo since 1985, serving a parish in Louisville before that. During his leadership in Buffalo attendance and income at the parish has doubled, a transitional housing facility for the homeless and single-parent families was built, a bookstore opened, and the endowment tripled. "Few people possess the combined talents we have found in Ward Ewing, said Bishop G.P. Mellick Belshaw, chair of the seminary trustees. "He is a pastoral person of great sensitivity and compassion. We welcome him to GTS warmly and with every confidence that his leadership will provide vision for the seminary's commitment to priestly formation and academic excellence for clergy and laity." Ewing said that he was "excited and honored" when he learned of the decision. He is expected to assume his office in the spring. Belshaw



will continue as acting dean until then.

### **Church of England bishops respond to papal encyclical**

(ACNS) The Church of England's bishops have formally responded to Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical on Christian unity, *Ut Unum Sint*. The bishops embraced the encyclical's insistence on the importance of common prayer, the need for repentance and conversion, the affirmation of joint action and patient theological dialogue, the recognition of common baptism and the degree of communion that flows from it, and the conviction that unity is required for authentic mission. The bishops raised issues, however, that need further study--including the teaching office of the church, the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the implications of common baptism for eucharistic hospitality, and the role of the bishop of Rome. In the foreword to the response, the archbishops of Canterbury and York stressed the point that the response is made with the same joy and fraternal affection that characterizes the encyclical itself and express a hope that "these reflections will be of help in the on-going ecumenical dialogue."

### **Woman priest celebrates Eucharist at Eau Claire cathedral**

(ENS) The Rev. Mary Caucutt served as a guest preacher and celebrant at Christ Church Cathedral in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on December 28, 1997. Bishop William Wantland, while opposed to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate, publicly stated at the General Convention in Philadelphia and before his clergy that he would not prevent the offering of an invitation to a woman priest to celebrate the Eucharist in the Diocese of Eau Claire. Shortly after General Convention, the diocesan executive council repealed all prohibitions against women priests in the diocese. After these actions and statements, the invitation to Caucutt was offered and carried the full support of the wardens and vestry of the cathedral.

### **Poll shows more people believing in God**

(AP) A recently released poll commissioned by the Pew Research Center reported that 71 percent of respondents said they never doubt the existence of God. In 1987, the figure was 60 percent. The poll also found that 61 percent of Americans believe miracles come from the power of God--an increase of 14 percentage points from a decade ago. And 53 percent said prayer is important to daily life. In 1987, it was 41 percent. The poll results appear to dovetail with popular culture: "Touched by an Angel" ranks among TV's highest-rated shows, and books on angels, miracles and spirituality, in general, line bookstore shelves.

### **Staccato Powell named to NCC post**

(ENS) The Rev. Dr. Staccato Powell was recently named National Council of Churches (NCC) deputy general secretary for national ministries. He currently serves as pastor for the Washington Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in St. Louis, Missouri. "If we are not passionate about our ministry, it will not be as 'contagious' as it ought to be," said Powell, who will give leadership to a diverse array of NCC national

ministries including education, advocacy, and evangelization. "We must be proactive. The church can no longer sit passively by and react to crisis situations that develop," he said. Powell succeeds the Rev. Dr. Mac Charles Jones, who died suddenly March 6, 1997, after serving only four days in the NCC post.

### **National Cathedral sculpture subject of lawsuit**

(NYT) The National Cathedral in Washington and the artist who created a sculpture of the Bible's creation story on its main entrance have sued the Warner Brothers movie studio, asserting that its film "The Devil's Advocate," displays a copy of the sculpture that distorts its religious meaning by making it appear demonic. The lawsuit asserts that Warner Brothers and its parent, Time-Warner, violated copyright law by "copying, grotesque distortion and unauthorized use of a profound and beautiful sculpture, 'Ex Nihilo' (Out of Nothing), for commercial gain. The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages and an injunction against showing the film, which was released in October. The lawsuit says a "bas-relief remarkably and substantially similar to 'Ex Nihilo' appears in some scenes of the movie on the wall of an apartment of a Manhattan lawyer, played by Al Pacino, who is revealed to be the Devil. In a climactic scene, the human forms in the sculpture appear to come to life, and, the lawsuit says, "begin engaging in sexual acts." In a statement, the sculptor, Frederick E. Hart, said he was "deeply disturbed that 13 years of work to create a sculpture of the profound mystery and beauty of God's creation would be so debased and perversely distorted."

### **NCC public policy advocates outline 1998 goals**

(ENS) A meeting of public policy advocates for the National Council of Churches (NCC) and its member denominations recently decided to focus on public education as a means of addressing their goals of reducing poverty, fostering racial justice, protecting religious liberty, and promoting peace and human rights. The theme of public education "touches immigration, race, poverty--virtually every issue we've said is among our priorities," commented NCC general secretary Joan Brown Campbell. Underscoring the urgency of the theme, advocates reported on Philadelphia schools without books, New York City's use of school bathrooms as classrooms, a \$1 million shortfall for public education in one Virginia county after the state reduced taxes, enormous disparities between schools in affluent and poor communities and ongoing confusion about appropriate religious expression in public schools. The December conference was the second annual "working session on how churches engage in public policy advocacy from our heritage of faith," said NCC associate general secretary for public policy Albert Pennybacker.

### **Bible Society joins drive to link all North America's churches**

(END) The American Bible Society (ABS) is giving \$5 million to a project intended to link every church in North America to the World Wide Web. The project--called Houses of Worship (HOW)-- aims to enlist every church in the United States and Canada, estimated at more than 300,000. The project expects to offer the opportunity world-wide by the year 2000. Churches which sign up will be offered four free pages on the HOW website (<http://www.housesofworship.net>). Through the Internet and the World Wide Web, project



initiators believe, churches can better connect with their members, with each other and with the communities they wish to serve. The project was initiated last year by the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, an interdenominational agency working on community needs and coordinating a national network of similar agencies in several U.S. cities.

### **PB Fund awards \$50,000 in emergency grants**

(ENS) The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief recently issued \$50,000 in emergency grants in response to civil unrest and natural disaster in Sierra Leone, Kenya and Spain. In Sierra Leone, the military coup of May 25, 1997, resulted in many civilian deaths and the destruction of homes and property. The Bishop of Freetown was forced from his official residence and the diocesan staff had to relocate its office. Two grants worth \$10,000 each will provide emergency food, medicine and shelter for affected parishioners in the Dioceses of Freetown and Bo. A \$15,000 grant was sent to Mombasa, Kenya, where a combination of civilian strife, heavy rains and flooding has caused damage to diocesan institutions and the displacement of many parishioners. Heavy rains and flooding also destroyed many homes and buildings in Alicante on the eastern coast of Spain. \$15,000 was given to the Spanish Reformed Church for flood relief.

### **Browning deplores attack on ecumenical patriarch**

(ENS) A bomb thrown into the property of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I seriously injured an Orthodox deacon and damaged a portion of the Cathedral of St. George in Istanbul, Turkey, in early December. The patriarch, who had just returned from a widely publicized tour of the United States, was not injured in the blast. The patriarch has been the target of several bombings in 1994 and 1996, including a hand grenade attack which damaged the cathedral. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning of the Episcopal Church immediately protested the violence to Turkey's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, calling for the government of Turkey to "root out and prosecute the perpetrators of such despicable acts." Browning, who met with the patriarch at the White House and other Washington events during Bartholomew's visit in November, said that the bombing "causes fear among the Orthodox Christian minority living in Istanbul and must be condemned as a shameless and cowardly act." Bartholomew, spiritual leader of 250 million Orthodox Christians, is known as the Green Patriarch for his outspoken support of environmental issues and his consistent messages of peace and love, especially during his U.S. visit when he "made an enormous impression on the American people," Browning wrote to the Turkish envoy.

98-2068

## **Burning Issues Conference brings diverse voices to sexuality debate**

**by Sarah Bartenstein**

Is the church's continuing debate over sexuality a gospel opportunity or a gospel threat?

That was the question posed to four speakers who addressed a standing-room-only audience at the third Burning Issues Conference on December 8 and 9 at the Virginia Diocesan Center at Roslyn in Richmond, Virginia.

Members of the Diocese of Virginia were joined by Episcopalians from Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Kansas, to form an attentive and diverse group listening to some of the most articulate voices in the church today.

The Rev. Gray Temple of Atlanta, Dr. Louie Crew of Newark, Diane Knippers of Fairfax, and Bishop James Stanton of Dallas, agreed on at least one point: the sexuality debate can be a gospel opportunity for the Episcopal Church. Their reasons for reaching that conclusion, however, were different.

Temple, the rector of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, Atlanta, characterizes himself as a liberal charismatic. He and Crew, the founder of Integrity, a ministry to gay and lesbian people in the Episcopal Church, favor the blessing of relationships between persons of the same sex, and believe such persons should be eligible for ordination. Knippers, president of the Washington-based Institute on Religion and Democracy and a board member of the American Anglican Council (AAC), and Bishop Stanton, AAC's president, oppose such actions, saying that represents a departure from the clear teaching of the church.

### **Dialogue 'in love and charity'**

The conference format was helpful, Bishop Stanton observed, noting that parliamentary or legislative arenas are not conducive to a clear and helpful exchange of views, because of the sometimes combative nature of those settings, and because each person is limited to a few minutes to express his or her views.

That had been the intent of Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia and the planners when they designed the conference: to provide a forum which could promote real dialogue rather than posturing or debate.

The presence of persons in the audience who are on either side of the question, as



well as those who confessed to continuing ambivalence, ensured that this was not a case of one side or the other "preaching to the choir."

During a 24-hour period marked by heartfelt exchanges, prayer, and as surprising amount of laughter, "people were in love and charity with each other," according to one participant, the Rev. April Trew Greenwood of Millers Tavern, Va.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive reviews coming from participants, however, many said they wished there had been even more time for discussion and questions. Bishop Stanton and others said they would like to see a continuation of the process begun at the conference.

#### **Four different perspectives**

Temple spoke first, after the speakers' order was determined by lot. He set the tone for the event, first by asking each participant to look at the persons seated on either side of themselves. Then, he urged, "Pray for them. Congratulate God for them. Agree with God about them."

He then began his comments by insisting that argument has not helped the church as it has tried to deal with issues of sexuality, because "no conflict is resolvable at the level at which it is waged."

"For the most part," he acknowledged, "we have not found each other's arguments plausible." Rather than rehearse those arguments, he said he preferred to "talk about how we talk."

He asked that conservatives stop calling liberals "revisionists, heretics, or libertines," and that liberals stop referring to conservatives as "homophobic, reactionary or developmentally challenged."

A helpful model for the conversation about sexuality, Temple suggested, might be the various ecumenical dialogues in which the Episcopal Church has engaged. A major hurdle in those conversations, he said, has been the historic episcopate.

To move such dialogues forward, "We will have to be willing to say something like this: 'We who have received grace through the apostolic ministry are eager to share that grace with those who have received grace through other ministries and are eager to have you share the grace of your ministry with us.'"

It is that posture, Temple argued, that is required in conversations on sexuality. He asked those on the opposite side of the sexuality issue, "Will you expose me to the grace you enjoy in that belief? I'd love to share with you the grace Jesus has offered with me as he has turned me inside out on this matter."

"Like participants in ecumenical discussion, all of us here share most values in common," Temple said. "All of us are saved, all know Jesus personally. All of us treasure the enrichment of our marriages that sexual fidelity and decorum provide. And all of us have received grace through the positions we espouse. May we share that grace? May we request it of each other?"

Temple asked that Christians "allow the Holy Spirit to lift us off the plane of conflict."

To the question raised by the conference title, "Gospel Opportunity or Gospel Threat?" Temple said, "There is no doubt in my mind that this debate is a blessing to the

church. It compels the Episcopal Church to pray together."

### **Focus on marriage, family**

Knippers, a member of Truro Church in Fairfax, Virginia, focused primarily on marriage and the family, and the ways that those institutions have been damaged by the culture.

Marriage "reflects the very image of the relationship between God and his people," she said. She called the current debate on sexuality "a great apologetic challenge."

"Human sexuality is rooted in our physical nature as created beings. We are two sexes, wonderfully made for each other," she said. Beyond the physical nature of human beings, "we are also created as social creatures. God's plan for humankind is that its primary and most basic organization is in families....Families start with a marriage."

She said that marriage is not "a private contractual relationship," so that individuals are not free to change the rules about marriage or the limits that society places on it.

There are many purposes to marriage, she said, but two are particular to that relationship: The first is what Knippers called "the unitive function," in which two persons become one flesh. "But this unitive function doesn't simply unite two individuals," she said. "There is a great divide and difference in the human family and the two sexes. In marriage, we are united with the other.'" The second purpose to marriage is its procreative function: "be fruitful and multiply."

Knippers charged that those who are "working very hard to legitimize homosexual practice, within society and within the church" will intentionally or unintentionally change the institution of marriage from the model intended by God. Allowing anything less than what she called God's "gold standard" for marriage would lead to its disintegration as an institution. Some who would allow blessing of homosexual unions "consider the ideal of life-long fidelity, in either homosexual or heterosexual relationships, not only hopelessly outdated, but repressive. These persons want to use homosexual unions intentionally to break down and redefine marriage."

Bishop Stanton, who addressed the conference the following morning, said, "The great debate about sex is not about sex but about self and wherein lies its salvation."

He said that the argument, in its essence, has to do with our answer to these questions: What is the purpose of life? What is the purpose of your life? Are human beings created to be loved by God, or are they created to love God?

There are two traditions regarding these questions, he said, and the debate boils down to whether we are going to "supplant one tradition with another."

One tradition says, "I am what I am. I have a right to be what I am. This is God's gift to me," said Stanton. The other tradition is the "Christian notion found in St. Paul: your life lies in God. You find yourself only as you give, only as you yield, and fall into obedience."

"When I confirm, I ask confirmands, 'Do you promise to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship?' What am I asking people to commit to, if there isn't any such identifiable thing?"



He challenged the audience to read Scripture not as fundamentalists or literalists, nor to pick apart passages such as the purity codes found in Leviticus, but to seek and discern the "essential patterns" found in the Bible.

"If there's a Gospel opportunity here, it's that we can rediscover the essential pattern of the Gospel story," Stanton concluded.

Crew began his presentation by reciting the Great Commission: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel," and following up with a story about the late Mother Teresa: An American woman, a resident of New York City, wrote to the famous nun, volunteering to work with her order during the New Yorker's sabbatical. She also enclosed a check for the order's work in Calcutta. After waiting weeks for a reply, one day a tattered envelope arrived with the woman's original letter enclosed. On the letter, Mother Teresa had scribbled two words: "South Bronx."

Then Crew said to the conference participants, "I have two words for you." He paused. "Gay Virginia."

"How are you getting the word across that God loves your gay and lesbian brothers and sisters as much as he loves you?" he gently admonished, asking how Episcopalians in Virginia are reaching out to homosexuals.

He told his own story of denying his homosexuality until well into adulthood. Then he "entered into sinful behavior with strangers because they were the only ones I dared risk it with."

"I thought I had left God, because I thought God had left me," he said.

Then he met the man who would become his life partner, and entered into a relationship that led to "a recovery not of my autonomous self," in a reference to Bishop Stanton's comments, "but of my Christian self."

"Sex is not our besetting sin," said Crew. "Our besetting sin is not temptation to unfaithfulness. Our besetting sins are pride, selfishness and unkindness."

"Sexuality is not a means of grace," he said, "but marriage is."

He told of visiting his father while the elder Crew was dying. "I know I'm not the son you wanted," he told his father, "but Dad, I love you very much."

"Louie, you're so wrong," his father responded. "You are the son I wanted."

Gay and lesbian persons likewise need to hear that they are loved and cherished for who they are. "I know that I am on this earth to tell people, 'God wants you .'" he said. "There are thousands of people who will never hear that unless I tell them."

"Do you know the whole world is waiting for us to get over this issue so that we can get on to the real issue, which is that God loves all of us?"

### **A step in the right direction**

After the conference, several of the 110 participants said it was an important step in the right direction.

"I've been through a lot of these dialogue processes and this was the first were we got anywhere," said Roger Boltz of Dallas, director of the American Anglican Council.

"I was very encouraged by this conference," Boltz continued. "This was a gathering of four voices who represent the great spectrum of diversity. They engaged the issue at levels other than emotion."

Boltz said he was impressed not only with the speakers but with those who came to hear them. "The audience that was here was ready to engage the issue." He said he would "love to see" the process continue.

The Rev. Rosemary Sullivan, rector of the Church of St. Clement, Alexandria, was also "impressed with the diversity of the group" who attended the event. She called the conference a "step in the right direction."

The event did not, however, cover up the real differences that exist in the church. "The conference showed clearly that for some in our church, personal experience judges and interprets Scripture, while for others Scripture judges and interprets personal experience," said the Rev. John Guernsey, Rector of All Saints, Dale City, Virginia. "I think it's crucial that Scripture retain its rightful place as our primary authority in Anglican Christianity."

Bishop Lee called the event a "very searching, very intense conference. Without exception, the presenters were thoughtful and prayerful as were the attendees. It was an important gift to the church at large."

The Burning Issues Conference is a memorial to the late Robert F. Gibson Jr., the 10th Bishop of Virginia, who was a champion of racial justice in the 1960s and a prominent figure in the ecumenical movement. He died in 1990. The first Burning Issues Conference on racial justice was in 1992, and the second on the sanctity of life in 1994. This was the third conference in the series.

-- Sarah Bartenstein is executive for communications of the Diocese of Virginia.

98-2069

## **Sermon at the Service of Investiture of the XXV Presiding Bishop**

**Washington National Cathedral**

**January 10, 1998**

**The Most Rev. Frank Tracy Griswold, III**

Grace and peace to those of you who are present in this sacred space representing the Episcopal Church, our worldwide Anglican Communion, the ancient churches of the East and West, the churches of the Reformation, and the two other faith communities--Judaism and Islam--who, together with us, call Abraham our father in faith. And grace and peace to



those of you who are far off, participating in this liturgy by means of electronic communication at various sites around the country. Think of where ever you are as a chapel, an extension of this vast cathedral church, and of yourselves as members of this worshipping assembly.

(As some of you are aware, today is the commemoration of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury: a Primate of the 17th Century whose views ecclesiastical and political, not to mention what we might call his leadership style, led to his being beheaded. Upon reflection I decided that it might be somewhat inauspicious to do more than include him discreetly among the saints and worthies in the eucharistic prayer.)

I want to begin our new life together with a story. It is a story about myself, but it is also a story about us, the people of God.

Well before the General Convention of last July and the election of a new Presiding Bishop, I accepted an invitation to participate in a conference in Italy sponsored by the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, an international program of spiritual formation which profoundly honors the religious intuitions and experience of children. The fact that the gathering was to be held in Assisi, the city of Francis and Clare, made the invitation all the more attractive. Once it became clear that I was to be a nominee, I looked forward to the conference, which was to take place in September after the election, figuring that it would either be a consolation, or a respite before the beginning of a new chapter.

"Let Assisi be your atrium," we were advised upon arrival. "Atrium," in the parlance of the Catechesis, is the classroom, or more accurately the environment, the space, which serves to foster and support encounter with the sacred mystery of God. "Let Assisi be your atrium," I said quietly to myself that first evening as I set out from my hotel for the Church of Sta. Chiara only a short distance away.

Entering the church, I saw a sign over a doorway in the south wall. It read: "The crucifix that spoke to St. Francis." "Ah, yes," I thought. "Of course. The crucifix from the Church of San Damiano where Francis prayed at the beginning of his conversion. The icon cross which has been reproduced over and over again. I have a copy of it on my desk at home."

Moved more by curiosity than devotion, I passed through the door and entered a darkened chapel. There the crucifix was, larger than I had imagined, illuminated by a single spotlight. As I sat in the darkness contemplating the figure of Jesus as one might a work of art that one has read about and is seeing at last, I found myself drawn to the cross as though it were a magnet. I moved from observer to participant, and from a pew to a prie-dieu at the foot of the cross. After some moments I looked down and saw that a prayer in four languages had been affixed to the top of the kneeling desk. It was, as I later learned, a prayer written by Francis himself before this very cross. Having been drawn to the cross, I now found myself drawn into the prayer: "Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a right faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity. Give me, Lord, wisdom and discernment, so that I may carry out your true and holy will. Amen."

In the silence of the chapel, the prayer spoke to me about what lay ahead: It begins with the plea that God enlighten and purify our hearts. It says that right faith, certain hope and perfect charity are not the result of our own psychological effort or active imagination, but the fruit of a transformed and undefended heart, a heart of stone which has

become a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). It asks God to search out the secret places where fear and bias, anger and judgement lurk unacknowledged and unrecognized. It is only by such a radical act of God's piercing mercy that authentic faith, hope and love can be born.

Each morning of the conference I got up early and made my way to the cross. Without explanation, I simply had to be there and pray the prayer. Part way through the week I found myself wondering, "What did the crucifix say to Francis?" Though I had read an account years before, I could not remember what the figure of Christ had said. Then one afternoon I wandered by chance into a small square and noticed a plaque on a nearby wall. As I read it, there was the answer to my question. Christ had said, "Francesco, va ripara la mia chiesa...Francis, go rebuild my Church." I was overcome and found myself in tears...tears of recognition that this was the call, the invitation, the strange attraction of a 12th Century crucifix.

At the same time I was skeptical. How like my romantic soul to create a moment of high drama and emotion. Did it come from an overwrought Frank Griswold who had too much Assisi, or did it come from the Spirit?

Later that evening I began to share what had happened with a Roman Catholic nun. I got no further than saying, "I was praying in front of the San Damiano crucifix," when she pointed at me and declared, "That's it; that's what your vocation is all about. Repair my Church." Hers was the confirming word I needed before I was able to allow Christ's words to Francis to find a home in me.

As the words from the cross took hold of me I found myself overwhelmed. Me rebuild the church? What arrogance, what an unbearable burden, what an impossibility, what an invitation to fantastical projections and unrealizable expectations. I wanted to confine Christ's daunting declaration to the life of St. Francis where it properly belonged. But then I have learned over the years that moments of resistance and unsettlement are almost always invitations to deeper prayer and greater availability to the Spirit. And so I gave the words to Francis freedom to be addressed to me, "Francis(Frank), go rebuild my Church." What I heard this time was a voice that said, "This task is not yours alone, it belongs to everyone who has been baptized into my death and resurrection. You are all called to rebuild my church."

Why have I told you this story? Because, as I said earlier, it is about us. Because it speaks of what we are to do together, and of what we are to be together.

What does it mean to rebuild the Church? There are, of course, many possible answers. What has become most clear to me is that the Church is not an object or an institution to be fixed or a building to be repaired as Francis himself thought at first. Instead the Church is a relationship to be lived: a relationship of communion established by God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit which finds expression and is made incarnate--is earthed and given flesh--in our communion, our fellowship, with one another. As such, the Church is always, in every age, being rebuilt and reformed out of the struggles and witness and compromised fidelity of its members. The same is true now and the same will be true at the end of nine years.

Baptism, which is the ground of today's Liturgy, is about communion, our being related to Christ after the manner of limbs and organs to a body. Each of us has been given some gift or manifestation of Christ's fullness which contributes to the building up of the



body, to our growth as one body to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of the risen Christ (Ephesians 4:13). What more dynamic or intimate or essential relationship can there be than that, than growing together through the gifts of one another into the fullness of who, only in Christ and only together, we can become?

Or again, through baptism we become living stones (1 Peter 2:4ff) integral to the building up of a spiritual temple not according to our own whims and fancies, but according to God's ever active and boundless imagination which, like the peace of God, passes all understanding.

This communion, this spiritual fellowship, also makes us permeable to truth: truth which is discovered in a living way through the sharing of the truth which is embodied in each of us, in what might be called the scripture of our own lives. Each one of us is a bundle of agony and idiocy, of grace and truth caught up into Christ. Who I am by the mercy of God is the gift I have to share, is my unique contribution to the ever expanding mystery of communion. "My brother (my sister) is my life", observed one of the desert monastics of the 4th Century, which is to say that it is not by accident but by divine intention, and it would seem at times by divine humor, that we, in a phrase from Bishop Rowan Williams, have been "caught up" by baptism "in solidarities we have not chosen."

Communion is not a human construction but a divine gift that is not always easy to accept. Because of our sinfulness we find all sorts of ways, often noble and high sounding ways, to stand against it. Communion is realized only through a costly and excruciating process of conversion and a radical transformation of consciousness. "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God," Paul tells us in the Letter to the Romans (12:2).

This renewing of the mind is largely a communal enterprise whereby your truth and my truth address one another and give room to one another. In the process something happens between us which enlarges the truth each of us previously held. Such is the nature of that sacred enterprise we innocently call conversation which carries within it the possibility of conversion, of being turned in a new direction by the word, the truth, of the other.

What would happen if instead of leading with our opinions fully formed and our conclusions smartly arrayed, we addressed one another as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, knit together by one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all? What would happen if instead of defensively declaring where we stand, we asked questions of one another such as, "Who is Christ for you?" "What does the church mean to you?" "How have you been challenged to live the Gospel?" Are we afraid that if we asked such questions we might have to modify our position and make room for the ambiguity and paradox another person's truth might represent?

And yet, a capacity for ambiguity and paradox is part of the glory and frustration of the Anglican way. Richard Hooker, possibly the greatest theologian in the history of Anglicanism observed, as Paul Avis reminds us, that though we long for "the most infallible certainty which the nature of things can yield," we proceed, in actual fact, by way of "probable persuasions."

The Anglican Tradition because of its "graced pragmatism" --- its reasonableness formed by Scripture and Tradition--- possesses a unique capacity for diversity, and the ability

to discern and welcome truth in its various forms. Through the subtle yet exacting rhythms of our common prayer the diverse and the disparate, the contradictory and the paradoxical are woven together in the risen Christ through the ever unfolding and always challenging mystery of communion. As a result, different dimensions of truth, different experiences of grace, can meet together, embrace one another, and share the Bread of life.

What we as the Episcopal Church shall be as we look to the future has yet to be revealed. I for one am immensely hopeful. Hopeful because of the good will and generosity of spirit which meets me almost everywhere I go; hopeful because of the vitality and faithfulness of congregations large and small; hopeful because of the deep desire on all sides to move beyond threat and accusation to a place of conversation, conversion, communion and truth: truth as is discovered in and through and with one another, truth as it is in Christ, who is himself the truth (John 14:6).

I spoke earlier of the need for a purified and transformed heart if our faith and hope and love are to be real, our communion authentic, and the continuing work of rebuilding the Church, which involves us all, is to go forward.

What is a purified and transformed heart? St. Isaac of Nineveh, a witness from the 7th Century, gives us this answer: "It is a heart that burns with love for the whole of creation --- for humankind, for the birds, for the beasts, for the demons, for every creature...for the reptiles too...". It is a heart from which "a great compassion...rises up endlessly." In more contemporary terms, it is a heart open to the paradoxes and contradictions of life; it is a heart that can embrace and reconcile the birds and the beasts, as well as reptiles and demons, however we might define them. A transformed heart is a heart that has been cracked open by God's love: it is a heart willing to have its tendency toward accusation and judgement overruled by the same voice Jesus heard at his baptism, a voice that speaks to each one of us and says, "You are my daughter, my Son, my Child, my Beloved, my Chosen One in whom I delight, in whom I rejoice, with whom I am well pleased simply because you are. Live on in my love; enter into my joy; abide in my peace. "

A transformed heart is therefore compassionate in the strength of God's own compassion, which was made manifest in Jesus the Compassionate One, and is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

A compassionate heart is a baptized, born again heart, a purified and transformed and discerning heart open to everyone and everything, a heart of communion that can embrace all sorts and conditions of humanity and the world around us, a heart that burns with God's own love for the whole mix and muddle of the world. It is a faithful heart capable of rebuilding the Church in the service of the Gospel for the sake of the world, over and over and over again.

May we, as a community of faith, as a church, be given the grace of such a heart. In a few moments we will give thanks over water to recall the mystery of our baptism. We will then renew our baptismal promises, our willingness to be caught up as limbs into Christ's risen body, built up as living stones into a spiritual house, the dwelling place of a compassionate heart.

At the end of his life, as Francis looked back over all that had been accomplished by the Order he had brought into being, he cried out, "My brothers, we must begin to serve our Lord and God. Until now we have done very little. Let us begin again."



My dear sisters and brothers, in communion with one another and sustained by our Anglican way, let us begin again, with the joy and courage of a transformed heart, to serve our Lord and God. Amen.

98-2070

## **Presiding Bishop Browning's letter to diocesan bishops and members of Executive Council regarding 'Unauthorized and misleading fundraising effort in the name of the church'**

**December 19, 1995**

I recently learned that Bishop Wantland of the Diocese of Eau Claire established a new nonprofit corporation in 1996 in the State of Wisconsin. This corporation is called "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Inc." Its organizational papers disclose that it is to be governed by a five-person Board of Trustees, which has included Bishop Wantland, Bishop Howe of Central Florida, and Bishop Schofield of San Joaquin. Tax-exempt status for this corporation has been sought and obtained. I further understand that the organizers have registered this corporation in almost every state throughout the country.

The Articles of Incorporation, a copy of which is enclosed, recite that the purpose of the corporation is "to engage exclusively in religious, educational and charitable activities, and particularly, the executive, administrative and financial administration of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church." Further, the Articles provide that the organization is to "have charge of the Church Pension Fund and the Church's program."

I have also received a copy of a fundraising brochure (a copy of which is enclosed) that seeks to solicit funds to support this new organization. That brochure is being distributed by Bishop Wantland and others, calling themselves "The Trustees of the Episcopal Church."

As you know, the name of this organization is virtually identical to the official name of the unincorporated association that constitutes our national Church, as set forth in the Preamble to the Church's Constitution. The organization's name also tracks the official corporate name of our Church "The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." The organization is thus using our Church's name in pursuit of its separate endeavor.



I have been advised that these actions violate the Church's right and need to protect its name from misleading and unfair use, creating confusion within our Church community and for the public more generally.

Immediately after learning of these developments, I spoke to Bishop Wantland asking that he and his colleagues stop these divisive activities and dissolve the corporation using the Episcopal Church's official name. I have had two responses from Bishop Wantland to these requests. In the first, he called to inform me that Bishop Howe had resigned as a trustee. A few days later, Bishop Wantland faxed me notification that he and his co-trustees, while they were taking steps to modify some of the stated purposes of the corporation as quoted above, nevertheless were re-stating their purposes to include the exercise of "stewardship" to "ensure that there will always exist in the United States a Church which remains in [the] Anglican Communion 'upholding and propagating the historic faith and order of the Book of Common Prayer.' " Moreover, Bishop Wantland stated that he and his co-trustees declined to change the name of the their organization, adding that in their view the "Episcopal church has been moving away from the use of the name 'Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America' by amending the canons and Book of Common Prayer." " I believe this response is most unfortunate.

In my opinion, the actions that have been taken are unwise and inappropriate because they seek to evade the traditional corporate discernment process that is so basic to the continued life and health of our Church.

In the days ahead, I shall be consulting further with the Presiding Bishop-elect and others, including Dr. Chinnis and other leaders of the Executive Council, to determine what may be the best course for the Church to follow. Meanwhile, I urge each diocesan bishop to inform your congregations and take counsel with your chancellor and other diocesan leaders regarding the potential impact of these matters upon your diocese. Finally, I ask your continued prayers and efforts to promote the unity of our Church.



98-2071

### **Griswold investiture available on videotape**

(ENS) The two hour video program (on two videocassettes) of Presiding Bishop Griswold's investiture in Washington National Cathedral will be available from Episcopal Parish Services (EPS) during the week of January 26. The cost is \$19.95, plus shipping. The one hour Odyssey special with highlights from the investiture live telecast also will be available from EPS for \$15.00, plus shipping. To place an order with EPS, call (800) 903-5544. Episcopal media resource libraries in dioceses and parishes are eligible for one complimentary copy of either or both programs. Library requests may be phoned to Eurith Jackson at (800) 334-7626, ext. 6102 or faxed to (212) 949-8059. Cable systems may request broadcast format tapes by sending email to the Rev. Clement W. K. Lee, ECUSA electronic media director, at [cwkl@dfms.org](mailto:cwkl@dfms.org).

### **Episcopal Media Center to distribute Cathedral Films**

(ENS) The Episcopal Media Center (EMC), an Atlanta-based nonprofit agency that produces and distributes audio and video resources for churches and individuals, will now be the sole distributor of Cathedral Films and Video products, including such favorites as "The Story of Anglicanism" and "The Story of the Episcopal Church." The Rev. Jim Friedrich, Cathedral Films and Video president, said the move "strengthens our ability to reach a wider audience while freeing our resources to concentrate on new production." EMC, formerly the Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation, is the source of a multifaceted collection of video and audio educational resources, television advertising spots, and radio programming. New videos include "From Survival to Growth," practical advice for parishes on evangelism and leadership, and the first two in a series on The Book of Common Prayer. For more information or a catalogue, call (800) 229-3788 or send an email message to [emc@comstar.net](mailto:emc@comstar.net).

### **Bible Reading Fellowship abandons fees to promote availability**

(ENS) The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) recently announced that it would offer its Bible study resources without charge to parishes that were unable to pay. "God has placed it on our hearts to do everything we can to get as many people as possible reading His Word daily," said Harry Griffith, founder of BRF. "We encourage (parishes) to order in bulk and provide copies for all their members. That means we may lose money by providing these materials, but we are in the midst of a fundraising campaign to offset those losses," he said.



Among the print resources offered by BRF are *Journey through the Word*, *Good News Daily*, and *This Week's Word*. For more details, visit BRF's website at [www.biblereading.org](http://www.biblereading.org) or write: Bible Reading Fellowship, Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32780-0380, (800) 749-4331 or (407) 628-4330, fax: (407) 647-2406.

### **Photographs available in this issue of ENS:**

1. Griswold invested as 25th presiding bishop of Episcopal Church (98-2062)
2. Colorful procession opens investiture service of presiding bishop (98-2062)
3. Griswold walks the streets of Anacostia during parish visit (98-2062)
4. Bishop Frank T. Griswold invested as 25th presiding bishop (98-2062)
5. Griswold invested as 25th presiding bishop at Washington Cathedral January 10 (98-2062)
6. Renewal of Baptismal Covenant major element at investiture service (98-2062)
7. Browning presents his successor to congregation at investiture service (98-2062)
8. Griswold seated in special stall at cathedral as part of investiture service (98-2062)
9. Griswold family poses following investiture service (98-2062)
10. Griswold visits local parish on the Sunday after his investiture (98-2062)
11. Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold celebrates Eucharist at his investiture (98-2062)
12. Raiser addresses future of World Council at meeting of U.S. member churches (98-2066)
13. Brownings say farewell to staff at Episcopal Church Center

All photos are available in color.

**The Episcopal News Service is available electronically. QUEST users can join the "Episcopal News Service" meeting to receive full versions of all stories or join "ENS Digest" to receive the digest versions of our news stories. Web users can visit the official Episcopal Church website at [www.ecusa.anglican.org](http://www.ecusa.anglican.org).**